

Unspoken Understanding

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Summary: A terrible fate has befallen Subaru after the Defeat of Petelgeuse. How will he continue onward?

***Chapter 1*: Prologue: Awakening**

"I've seen this ceiling before" Subaru mused, having recently woken up from his most recent Return by Death. Grasping at his chest, he began to replay the scene in his head once more. The blank, unconscious body of Rem sat at the front of his mind like rain clouds on a wet spring morning. After the fall of Petelgeuse, he had gone to look for her in hopes of celebrating a job well done. However, on the trip back to camp, he began to notice something he had seen before.

Not a single person in the world could remember who Rem was, and later arriving at the camp site, he had found her with an amnesia ridden Crusch. They had been fighting something, that much was obvious. But the painful realization that had befallen Subaru afterwards was what caused his Return this time around. "Hey, Rem? Are you awake or just sleeping?..... You're just kidding, right, Rem?" Subaru lightly shook the helpless maid before giving up after about an hour, each shake and word used with less effort than the last as he repeated the same mantra. Try as he might, Rem would not wake from her comatose state. In a last ditch effort, Subaru found the nearest blade he could and-

Blank nothingness surrounded him for a split second before his reawakening here. Attempting to restart the section involving the defeat of Betelgeuse seemed only natural to the self proclaimed hero. But as it turned out, this new life of his was not destined to be that simple.

After his morning stretch, he jumped out of bed, realizing nearly immediately that his respawn was not the same as before. "The last Return by Death point should have been after the defeat of the White Wha...." Subaru trailed off as realization hit home. Fear struck him like a cold bag of bricks to the face as he began sprinting at top speed, desperately trying to get there in time. It was already too late. There was nothing he could do. Subaru couldn't even count how many times he had repeated the process, certainly long enough to the point that the nature of Rem's condition had set in. There was no amount of effort he could give to make it in time; he had already tried countless times. She was permanently asleep with no need for food, or water, and nobody in existence could remember her. As if the White Whale had just erased her consciousness and memory.

He could still feel the damage the most recent blade had done to his neck as if it were still lodged there even now. Pain of the flesh was no new ordeal to Subaru, but what plagued his thoughts currently were all the times Rem had come to save him, and how she believed in him to be a hero when nobody else did. Tears began to well up in the battered boy's eyes as he let out a gut-wrenching whimper that didn't even amount to an eighth of the pain he currently felt. He didn't have the strength to yell, or complain, or to even feel angry or sad at himself for failing to save her.

Slowly raising himself out of the oh-so-familiar bed he had gotten used to waking up in, he took a moment to try and collect himself. It was then that he realized that Beatrice, the resident librarian and Spirit of the Roswaal mansion was watching him as he wept. "What is with you and always waking up in the strangest situations, I suppose?" her verbal tick a welcome and much needed constant in his world of uncertainty. He had no quick comebacks for the drill loli this time, as he attempted to pause his clustered grief for the faintest of seconds to explain his current situation. "You don't remember her either, do you?" he mused, more to himself than anyone else, just barely enough to pique the ears of the concerned Beatrice.

"Who are you to ask such a loaded question like that, I suppose?" she retorted, almost irritated that Subaru would insinuate anything about her without consulting her first. "Rem. The other demon maid that works here with her sister Ram ever since long before I arrived here" he continued, almost cutting Beatrice off mid-sentence. "What

makes you think I would forget about such an important part of our staffing here at the mansion, I suppose?" she answered monotonously as usual. "Wait, so does that mean that you remember her? But I saw-" he stopped himself mid sentence, remembering suddenly the penalties of trying to speak too much about other timelines or his ability to reset upon dying.

"Whatever, just come with me for now" he forced out, angrily as he grabbed Beatrice's hand and began walking down the hallway. "W-w-What are you doing to me, I suppose? What do you need to know? I-" cutting her off mid sentence, Subaru stopped and spoke quietly this time. "Please, just come with me for a little while. I need to check if what I think is right or not". Beatrice paused for a second, "I will grant you your nonsense favor, but don't expect me to continue helping you all the time, I suppose". Subaru knew this was a lie by now, as he had been relying on the girl more times than he could remember in various loops, just to get to where he was currently.

Searching the house top to bottom, he finally stumbled upon Ram, the sister of the currently incapacitated Rem and set in motion his test. "Good morning Ram. I need to answer a simple question for me" he said. "Oh, Barusu, I don't take it as a surprise that you come to me for help, but it is interesting to see you here Beatrice-sama" she said curiously. "Ok Beatrice, this is the reason I brought you here. Ram, do you remember your sister Rem? Anything at all?" he asked, already knowing what the outcome was going to be. "What?! You brought me all the way here for a question as stupid as that?!" she shouted furiously. "Of course it's a stupid question, I've never heard of someone with that name in my life" she blankly stated.

Subaru had enough after that, and was satisfied with the conclusion he had found as his thoughts drowned out Beatrice's genuine shock and confusion. Calmly walking down the long corridors, he went to the kitchen, and grabbing a sharp blade from the pantry, he made his way back to his room. It was almost mid-day before Beatrice had finally caught up to him, as he stared at the blade held in his hands. "I have been searching all day for you, I suppose! How rude of you to just leave me there without so much as an explanation!". She looked down at a glimmer of light reflecting off of the large kitchen knife Subaru was clutching in his right hand. "What do you think you're going to do with that weapon, I suppose!?" she screamed at him, trying to stop the imminent sin about to be committed.

"I'm so very tired, Beatrice. I've spent the last weeks suffering silently over things nobody could ever hope to understand. Things that I can't even share, not for lack of trying" Subaru solemnly stated under his breath, attempting to get out some of the pain that refused to leave him for even a split second. "Putting it simply, Beatrice, I've made up my mind to enjoy what time I have left before I inevitably give in" he said, merely assuring himself of what he was about to do. He slowly drew the weapon to his throat, but was stopped just short by a pair of small, fragile hands.

"I don't understand a single thing that you're saying, but just because nobody remembers Rem, that doesn't make suicide the correct answer, I suppose!" she pleaded with him, not realizing sooner how much she hated people dying under her watch. Unaware that her words here were meaningless, she continued "I know that you cared about those two girls, but you can't do this to Emilia, it will crush her I suppose. Do you want to impose your pain on her as well, I suppose?!" her colder calculating side got the better of her for a split second, but the damage had already been done.

Tears once again began flowing from Subaru's eyes like a waterfall. "You're the one who doesn't understand anything here! I could have saved her, but I was careless and this outcome is the result of that carelessness! She comforted me in my time of need, believed in me when I didn't believe in myself and wanted to run away. How did I repay her?! I let her die out there! It's MY fault that this happened!" he was screaming by this point, with whatever energy he had left. All of the anger he held towards Betelgeuse and his wish to save Emilia had blinded him of what was important.

He knew that this could have been prevented, but Beatrice didn't. She was going to try to find some reason for him to not stab himself, because deep down she cared for all

the people under the Roswall mansion household. But it wasn't going to do any good now, she was inadvertently driving the stake further into Subaru's heart and it was too late to turn back now. "And I was just hoping that I could finally catch some rest too." he whispered to the darkness, as he plunged the knife directly into his skull, hard enough and fast enough to instantly kill him. The agony ripped through his entire body in a split second, and with a screech of torment, Subaru had ended his own life in this loop yet again.

Shooting up from his lonely prison of a bed for the umpteenth time, he yelled for a few seconds before his lungs ran out of breath. The door to Subaru's room slammed open with a resounding THUD!. "Subaru, are you alright?!" Emilia, the white haired elf girl asked him, after rushing into his bedroom having heard his screech from earlier. "Yeah, I'm alright right now..." he slowly trudged on, trying to keep himself from seeming too suspicious. "Well don't just scream like that out of nowhere, it scared Puck too! He was worried about you" as if on cue, the cute cat spirit popped out Emilia's necklace jewel. "Lia, he doesn't seem alright to me. I can usually tell what he's thinking, but today it's as if I'm blocked by a wall of dark clouds" the spirit spoke aloud.

'Well that's because you haven't met whatever creature owns the black hands that prevent me from speaking about it' Subaru thought, internally cursing the blasted hands that kept him from spilling even a single word about his ability or the other timelines he has lived out. Subaru was shocked to see Ram come bolting into his room, seconds after Puck had finished his thought, completely out of breath. He wasn't sure why, but the demon maid looked as if she had seen a ghost. "Oh, Ram-san perfect timing. Could you look after Subaru for a short while? Puck doesn't seem to think he's alright today. I can't stay with him all day, as much as I really want to" she said with concern written all over her face and tone.

Taking a second to catch her breath, Ram simply stated "As you wish, Emilia-sama" staring at Subaru for a short while before exiting the room. Soon after, Subaru was left with his thoughts and broken mind to taunt him as he attempted to make sense of his current situation. He tried to grieve over Rem's "death" but she wasn't really dead. His mind couldn't get over the chance that she could be saved, but was unable to let his failure to prevent it leave his mind.

Immediately, all thoughts and attention shot to the door at his room, as Ram had swung the door open wide, silently shutting it behind her. She had brought sweets and tea along with her. Probably at the request of Emilia, Subaru silently thought to himself.. She sat them on the bed next to him, with a short thank you escaping Subaru's lips before slowly trying to eat one of the delicious looking desserts.

'Well I guess I do need to try and keep my strength up' Subaru thought to himself, and began slowly eating the delicacies in front of him. He hadn't noticed it until a few minutes after he began eating, but for some reason, Ram had yet to exit his room. It puzzled the young man as he ate, but he could tell she was waiting to say something to him. "Alright Ram, there's no need to keep sitting here and waiting to speak. Just say whatever's on your mind so that I can be through with it" closing his eyes, he awaited whatever verbal punishment was about to come his way.

What came next shocked the internally grieving boy. Suddenly, he felt Ram's arms shoot around him, as she practically jumped into his stomach, gripping him like he was a broken glass window and would lose the pieces if she let go. Ram began to cry slowly but surely, trying to make herself unable to be heard but it was plenty enough to make Subaru extremely concerned for the girl.

"Woah, woah, woah, wait a second Ram, what's going on?! What happened? Why are you crying and leaning on me of all people?" he was genuinely confused about the current situation. By no means did Ram ever really hate him, but she certainly wasn't the type of girl to just start crying all of the sudden, much less on him. "I'm sorry....." she managed to squeak out beneath the muffled sobs coming from just behind Subaru's head. "I'm so so so sorry Subaru...." she choked out amidst her own rapid

cries and breathing. Subaru began to seriously worry, as nothing like this had ever happened in any of the other timelines. "I don't... I couldn't have... I didn't know..." those were the only words he could make out at the current time and even though he didn't know what was going on or why, he began to cry as well.

Subaru, unable to wipe the tears from his eyes, wept as the emotions of the past two weeks or more of resetting began untying themselves. Ram began speaking in between whatever time she had not crying or attempting to continue breathing. "I know! I know everything that happened between you and my sister!" she had a hard time containing her voice, but managed to confine the one sided conversation to just his room.

"You....know...everything? What are you saying?" his confusion and interest taking hold for a minute before the next words out of Ram's mouth completely broke his remaining fortitude. "I know... everything, Subaru. From before you came to this world, about your life before here and how even though you weren't satisfied with how it was going" she paused for a brief moment to catch her breath. "It was a good life compared to what has happened to you here. I experienced everything you went through from your first step in this world till now. All the pain, suffering.... How many times you reset trying to save Emilia.... How many times you reset trying with every fiber of your being to save sissy..."

As she spoke, Subaru felt an immense amount of sadness for the poor girl, recounting his story so far. "I didn't just see them either, I felt what it was like for you. How horrible it was, to be betrayed time and time again by forces outside your control, and being brutally killed, cursed, bludgeoned, stabbed! Treated awfully at every turn because nobody knew or could know, but still being ignored and hardly ever trusted by anyone. Only to have the one person who believed in you, my beloved sister, disappear from the world, not once, but three times and have nobody remember her at all! Including me!" Ram had begun losing control of herself, and was now visibly shaking in Subaru's arms even as she held onto him with everything she had.

"The things we did to you... that I did you ... I can never take them back! I killed you with my magic, by my hand, not once but twice! And after all that pain you had endured, you willingly committed suicide! You jumped off a cliff! All for the sake of me and my sister! Yet I still continued to doubt you! Even after saving the townsfolk, saving Emilia for the second time, and saving my sister! I tried to kill you a third time! Over what?! A stupid blank note that was a mistake you didn't even commit!" By now, anybody passing by would have heard this exchange, but with the mansion being as large as it was, the two were left to sob, grieve, cry and comfort each other.

He knew how much pain he had been through, but never in a million years would he wish that kind of torment on somebody else. They continued to sob for so long that day turned to night, and after half of a day, both of them had returned to a relatively neutral state. "How many times did you do it? Kill yourself over the past day to try and save Rem?" she asked, but they both knew he didn't remember. "So how did this happen to you in the first place? What caused this?" he questioned aloud. "All I remember was doing my normal chores when a black hand grabbed me from a wall of darkness, and I-I w-w-was f-forced to l-live out your.." she said, fumbling over her words at the end, not even finishing the sentence.

Subaru thought it over for a second and coming to no conclusion, he stood up. Walking just enough out of sight, Subaru grabbed the sharpest object he could find from nearby: A simple cup. By far the most makeshift suicide he had performed thus far, but it would have to suffice. However, he was grabbed the instant before Subaru could crack the cup on the table's edge.

His hands were stopped by a much larger, more gentle force, however the words that came after were anything but. "What do you think you're doing Subaru!?" Ram angrily yelled at him under her breath, trying to stay quiet and unheard from potential onlookers. "I have to fix this, Ram! I can't leave you with the kind of suffering I've been through in your hands! I-" Subaru felt a hand smack him so hard across the face that

he fell ass backwards back into his bed. "No! I won't let you continue on like this! Not after everything you've already done for me and my sister, even if we can't talk to her right now!" her shoulders began to visibly shake.

"You can't keep going on like this alone! Sooner or later you're gonna break, and you along with everyone else might not ever get a happy ending, even if you find a way to go home! I already know what you're thinking, if you're wondering how I knew what you were going to do. You were going to reset the timelines to erase my gaining your experience. I can hear your thoughts too, idiot!"

Shocked by the recent developments, tears still streaming down the boy's face, a more pressing matter came to his mind. He paused for a second, and attempted to collect his thoughts before beginning. "But I'm not sure if I could take it... I wouldn't be able to take it if you forgot somewhere along the line! I've had nobody who could ever understand my situation until today. If you lost your memory of it again..... I'd just end up breaking myself all over again".

It was then that Ram heard the three words she was dreading hearing for the second time today. "I'm tired, Ram." She released the firm grip holding the cup in the air before embracing him as tightly as she could. "Please don't do what you're thinking of doing...." she pleaded with the boy, knowing he planned on Returning by Death the second she let go of the cup. She had placed all her bets in hoping that she could console and support his weary and tired soul.

Subaru stood in blank awe of the scene unfolding before him, and before Ram could react, he dropped the broken cup to the floor. He had cracked the edge of the dish on the table like he had planned, and slashed his own throat open deep. "NO! How could you!? I don't want you to break! You have to stop! Nothing good can possibly come of this!" she said as she eased the boy to the floor and began to cover his wounds. "At least you won't be forced to live with the same regrets as sadness that I have" he sputtered out, spitting up blood before falling back into another reset. He could hear the anguish in her voice as everything began to rewind, but in his mind he knew that it was for the best.

However this time, his awakening was even more confusing. Subaru had awoken slowly to the feeling of something warm pressed up against his back, and unlike before, he was laying on his side. Ram had curled herself up against his back protectively with her arms encircled around his midsection. He attempted slowly to break free, hearing a few short words from behind him as the arms tightened to restrain him lovingly. "Not again.... I still remember... I didn't forget your suffering! I refuse to let you go through it alone! Not for as long as I still remember and you still exist here. I won't let you...." she said quietly into his ear, the stern and pained words caused Subaru to settle down, whimpering softly.

He knew that he had saved her sister, and done many things over multiple timelines to protect them, but even if Ram did experience his pain, he would never have expected her to do something like this. He knew that if she was willing to stake being found in this current state, clutched against his backside, he would never betray this gifted trust between them.

***Chapter 2*: Chapter 1: Re:Set, New Rules**

***Chapter 3*: Chapter 2: The Margrave's Knowledge**

Subaru stormed down the halls of the spacious mansion in the opposite direction from where Beatrice's Door Crossing was last located; blazing through the building at breakneck speed as he passed right by the room he had awoken in. 'Alright Roswaal, Ram's been here for years before I came along, and suddenly she has mana issues? This whole thing reeks of your doing!' He was more or less blowing off steam, as the young NEET wanted to be composed upon reaching Roswaal himself.

'I know for a fact that he has some kind of information! After all, he always seems to show up exactly on cue when we need him to, he knows something for sure!' In fact, Subaru was quite sure that even though he didn't need to rush himself, he would be screaming right now if he wasn't forcefully out of breath. As he approached the Margrave's door, he slammed his shoulder into the side of it entirely disgracefully as the lord of the manor sat across the room from him; with the same smile Roswaal always donned, as if waiting for him.

"Weeeeeeeeeeeell then Subaru-kun. It haaaaaaaaaaaaaas been quite a while since the last time we spoooooooooooooooooooooke." Subaru breathed heavily for a few seconds before steadying himself, and responded. "You know something! I'm not sure what, but there's a reason that Ram is in the condition that she is, and I know you've got some explanation as to why!" He yelled directly into Roswaal's face as he slowly approached the clown-makeup and seemingly jester attire that the master magician always wore, without fail.

"Aaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhhh, so that's how it is, is it? Yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeees, well as a matter of fact, I do have the iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinformation that you're inquiring of me." Subaru's eyes shot open wide, as he lowered his tone of voice slightly. He wasn't willing to risk invoking the full anger of Roswaal, as memories flashed back to what he did to the Ulgram dogs that he failed to kill even one of. "As it turns out, I've been out like a light for the last week." The magician slowly leaned back in his chair as he folded his legs and placed his right hand underneath his chin. "Why yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeees. I do remember Emilia-sama mentioniiiiiiiiiiiiing that to me quite recently at dinner."

"Cut the crap! You've already spelled out that you have what I'm looking for, why are you dragging this out for so long! Do you even care what happens to the inhabitants of the mansion?!" Subaru was beginning to lose his cool as the Margrave continued to run the boy in circles with conversation, tiptoeing around the potential knowledge at play. "I simply wished to find out whyyyyyyyyyy it is that you're suddenly the focus of two of my staff's attention. It iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiiis important that they do what is required of them, the saaaaaaaaaaaaame applies to myself; even to you, Subaru-kun. We all have a roooooooooooooole to play here"

"Right now, I don't care what it is you're talking about! Do you plan on giving me what I'm asking for, or not?!" Subaru was beyond furious at the man's clever word games as he drug the whole conversation out much longer than Subaru wanted to be in his presence at the moment. "Oh deeeeeeeeeeeear me, Subaru-kun. Maybe I was a little early in telling yoooooooooooo that piece of knowledge.... You wiiiiiiiiiiiiish to know why the young maid is currently lifeless and drained of mana, coooooorrect?" He spoke in a haughty tone that clearly overstated the obvious.

"You still haven't bothered to answer my question, Roswaal-sama. I'm leaving to solve this myself if I don't hear a concrete answer as the next words from your mouth."

Subaru was letting his anger get the better of him, and it showed in the tone of his voice. His shouting was replaced with a lower register, and a cold stare as he rode out the extreme rollercoaster of emotions that was currently hitting him dead-on. "Oh myyyyyyyyyyyyyyy. Just whaaaaaaaaaat is it you think I've done? For your information, Iiiiiiiiiii haven't done anything to the maid girl. In fact, that's the reeeeeeeeeeeason why she's like this now."

Roswaal smiled as he accomplished grabbing the boy's attention as his mouth opened slightly, before closing it and the door behind him as he took a seat on his side of the desk that divided the two. "I'm listening, but not for long. What do you want in return?"

Subaru spoke through pursed lips as it dawned on the boy. If he wanted Roswaal to give up anything, it usually never came without a price. "Aaaaaaaaaaaaah. It seems that youuuuuuuuuuuve finally remembered that I don't oooooooooooooowe you anything currently. Now, I doooooooooooooo hate to remind you, but there was no reason to treat my home with suuuuuuuuuuuuch disrespect after what I've done for you. Aaaaaaaaaaaaafter all, you did use my connections and influence while you were in the capital to garner the foooooooooooooorce that slayed the white whaaaaaaaaale and Witch's Cult."

"Tsk." Subaru gritted his teeth as he was painfully reminded of his own uselessness. He had only managed those two feats with the help of two other candidates for the throne, of which he had enticed with no easy negotiations. "Nooooooooooooooooow Subaru-kun. There's no neeeeeeeeee to show me a face like that. I'll happily give you the iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiinformation that you want. Just remember to whooooooooooooooooooooooooom you are indebted." Roswaal was a shrewd man, and did not enjoy being trampled over by the young boy. "You seeeeeeeeeeee, Subaru-kun, the reason for Ram's current situaaaaaaaaaaaation is simple. I've been the giiiiiiiiiiiiirl's mana source for quite a while without anyone being wiser to that fact."

Subaru's stoic and enraged position and body language dropped out his feet as sudden realization hit him. "W-what..... Are you talking about..... Roswaal?" Intrinsically, the Margrave smiled and looked down at the boy before closing his eyes. "To put iiiiiiiiiiiiiiiit simply, she'd stopped coming to receive mana from meeeeeeeeeeeeeeee as she had been before. Our deaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaal was that in order to hide her weakness, sheeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee would meet me in my office here when she needed mana." Subaru's expression turned blank and his eyes glossed over as he had the whole truth spelled out for him. "Y-you can't be serious.... Ram was...."

Roswaal turned away from the boy, retracing his steps and sat down across from Subaru before staring him down. "Quiiiiiiiiiiiiiite simple, don't you think? She didn't want aaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaanyone to know how debilitated she was..." He spoke with an air of sadness that seemed disingenuous as Subaru's body failed to produce motion or even a single word. He stared, horrified into the face of Roswaal across the desk as his brain struggled to comprehend the situation. Roswaal tilted his head slightly, quizzically as he attempted to read the young man's expression. "You seeeeeeeeeeeeem to be struggling to comprehend my words. Don't tell me that you doooooooooon't believe that someone like Ram wouldllllllld hide her instability?" Subaru was less unbelieving than the margrave thought he was as images flashed through his head. He was reminded of what it must have looked like through Ram's already troubled body and mind to forcibly watch the man who gave up his life time and time again to save both herself and her sister.

"So... It's all my fault again, then isn't it?" Subaru dejectedly spoke about himself like a piece of trash along the wind. He couldn't help but do it. This whole time since after his loops to save the sisters he had somewhat viewed his own life as meaningless even though he wanted to live. It didn't matter if he died even if it was painful, because he would be the only one to suffer. It was as if the universe was playing some sort of cruel trick on him, allowing him only enough lead to think that he had the advantage before yanking him back down into the reality of the desperate situation. He couldn't undo whatever made Ram connect with this curse.... Witch... whatever it was that forcibly made him retry from square 1.

It was like the world's most cruel video game where death was no longer a consequence and pain becoming the most likely outcome. He was sure that when Ram woke up, he would have to try and explain everything that she saw but in the meantime Subaru had unknowingly hurt somebody he cared about. It was like his own personal curse, in which he always ended up more broken than last time. He couldn't be sure of how much of his life and experiences Ram was going to see from now on, but Subaru found himself kneeling and holding back sobs. "Why do things like these always happen....? Why am I always the one who has to fix everything....?"

"Because my Gospel haaaaaaaaaaaaas told me so... O chosen one of the Witch." Subaru tilted his head sideways as he failed to comprehend the scene before him.

Roswaal in his right hand held a Gospel - one like the Archbishop Sin of Sloth had carried before Subaru killed him. "What the fuck is that....? Why the fuck do you have one of those?! I never asked to be chosen by some witch I've never even met before!" Roswaal nodded and continued on "Mmmmmhhhhhh and yeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeet here you stand, with that perplexing ability of yours..... Just how many times have you died before?"

Subaru nearly fell backwards head over heels and had to step backwards to steady himself. There was just no way..... right? There was no way that the man that stood before him... no, this devil with the skin of a man could possibly know about Return by Death. "Just what are you saying.....". Roswaal shook his head back and forth, seemingly in disappointment. "Oh deaaaaaaaaaaaaaar... I didn't think that you could disappoint me this much.... But, the way that things are now it's surprising that youuuuuuuuuuu would deny the truth even when it's spelled out in front of you."

The margrave stepped menacingly around his desk, making his way front and center in front of the boy. "You're in denial because of the shock.... Buuuuuuuuuut that doesn't mean you can use that as an excuse to deny fact. This Gospel is one of a kiiiiiiiind, but someone like you would never understand what that means. Oh dear, it seems you fouuuuuuuuund yourself in quite the predicament this time around". Subaru attempted to muster the courage to scream at him, give him a verbal lashing for all the injustices that he so simply confessed to but...

Nobody would believe him. Subaru knew this fact better than anyone. His words weren't convincing in the least to most people, let alone all the people who put their faith in the Roswaal L. Mathers name and domain. He was up against Cerberus with nothing but a pencil and his voice, no weapons or support to be found. It truly was a dead end scenario for the time being. "So it was you all along then, huh? Sorry to sound repetitive, but when the person who's supposed to be responsible for all the people under your domain I have a hard time comprehending why you'd want to undermine them so easily".

"Ah yes, the crux of huuuuuuumanity. When something gets between you and your goals, you have threeeeeeeeeee options. Give in, and let fate follow its course. Fight against that fate for your goal. Or give up the guaranteed success in your goals in an attempt to save everything. Eventually, you will find that if you strain yourself too hard in a futile attempt to save everything as you have been; you will reach the point that I have". Subaru wanted to spit the words out of his mouth and brain as the thought of becoming even slightly like the demon in front of him was disgusting. He wanted to run over with overwhelming strength and punch the devil in his smug face, but that was impossible.

"So what.... You want me to become single minded like you are and focus on my goals even if that means forsaking everything else....? Sorry, but I just don't think like that. I can't even comprehend how someone like you walks around like that, pretending to have other people's best interest in mind". Subaru wanted to spit every nasty insult he's ever learned towards the man, but keeping the conversation towards the point of learning what he needed to was next to impossible for him. He was boiling with anger, and yet boxed in so tightly that there was no way he could do anything about it currently.

"Eeeeeeeeeeeeeeventually, you'll realize that thinking in that fashion is..... Ultimately useleeeeeeeess. You'll let something fall through the cracks the more you try to protect everything". The margrave shook his head in lackadaisical frustration. It was as if he couldn't even bother himself to show real anger or anything more than an afterthought towards the boy who couldn't even live up to his impossible standard. It was at this moment that Subaru dropped to the ground, crying lightly to himself. He was instantly reminded of Rem..... Roswaal was completely correct in one thing - He had already failed in his task. It was so simple. He was one person, and the world was too large for him to save everyone. Subaru, despite all best attempts, was already a failure in his mission. He let down the one person in the world who held faith in him when nobody else would.

"...I'm leaving...." Subaru spoke coldly through his teary eyes and walked off in the direction of Ram and the library where she was recuperating with Beatrice. "So soooooooooooooon? But we'd only just begun chatting.... I didn't even get to the interesting paaaaaaaaaart....." He spun around in a flash of hatred, waiting to hear the next vile act the wizard had enacted on his people. "What else have you done that you feel the need to stop me when I'm already on my way out the door?". Roswaal tilted his head inconspicuously before continuing "I just thooooooooought you might want to know how it was that Ram lost her horn in the first place". Subaru's heart sunk. "What did you do...!" he spat out nearly under his breath as the margrave made his way back behind the imposing desk, tapping a pen against the table.

"You might knooooooooooooow that Ram lost her horn protecting Rem when her village was attacked..... Buuuuuuuut I'm assuming that you probably didn't know that I was in the area when that attack happened...." Roswaal seemingly waited for the boy to inquire but sighed deeply when he stood there in awe of the monster that stood before him. "Hoooooooooowever, I was more than occupied with my own goals and plans for the day.... So I chose to let the attack play out". Subaru's fists were shaking relentlessly and he bit into the bottom part of his lips, drawing a considerable amount of blood. "Y-you.....You..... You BASTARD! YOU LEFT THEIR VILLAGE TO DIE! FOR WHAT?!"

Roswaal smiled, as he led the boy along the path in conversation that he wanted to follow. "Everything I dooooooooooooo plays out with my goals in mind. Deaths incurred caaaaaaaaaaaaaan be overlooked now that a power like yours exists..... I don't have to feeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeear my own demise because the sisters will come to protect me, and you want them to live. Thaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaat makes you my pawn by default you see?" Subaru was an emotional mess with tears flowing slowly and steadily from both of his eyes. "How dare you... How dare you play with other people's lives when you have the ability to make things better! I'm just one normal human other than this curse that's been thrust upon me by a witch I don't even know and I've accomplished way more than you ever thought of doing!"

"While it is trueeeeeeeeeeeeeee that I've been more than lackluster when it comes to saving people or doing the 'right thing' as moooooooooost people would see it.... Everything is for my own goals. Following the gospel has led me to this conversation with one who has the power to change and alter fate itself. I have very high expectations and hopes for you.... Try not to let me down in the future...." Subaru was at his breaking point and had more than enough of the margrave's sick and twisted way of viewing the world and its people. "You're inhuman..... You never were from the start ever since I met you.... It's all for your own goals? What kind of bullshit is that! You've so easily trampled over everyone and everything in your path and for what? Some unknown goal that you refuse to disclose to anyone! I...." He took a deep breath in before looking Roswaal directly in both eyes. "I will NEVER become something like you....." before storming off and slamming the doors to his office behind him on the way out.

"Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeell that's no big issue to me.... After all, even if you or I die, so loooooooooong as something isn't in its place I can count on you to try and fix it. Every faaaaaaaaaailure is just another attempt to get things right. In the end.... You will seeeeeeeeeeee that giving up everything else but the goal in front of you is the right solution. You will lose more people under that flaaaaaaaaaawed philosophy of yours, Subaru-kun". Roswaal spoke knowingly, as if he was prepared for an outcome that had yet to take place before he returned to his work as if nothing was ever the matter.

Walking far enough away from the margrave's office to be unheard by him, he spoke to himself in a fit of rage. "Damn.... Damn.... Damn... DAMN IT ALL!" Subaru screamed at the top of his lungs, not wanting anyone to hear him. It was another hopeless situation. He wasn't even sure how he was supposed to tackle this problem. There was the person responsible for putting the two maid women in their current situation and what could he do about it? Sit on the sidelines and let himself get played and moved like a piece on a chessboard. There wasn't even a situation for him to solve at the moment, as no enemies other than the one who sat at the top of this domain looking

down on all of his people. They were no more than names and faces to him, meaningless specks in the grand scheme of whatever plans he hoped to carry out.

Subaru stomped his way around the mansion for a little while to burn off steam before walking in the direction of what he felt like was the Forbidden Archives. He needed to check on Ram's condition, and at least then he could sit with some sense of relief that he accomplished something positive today. He walked up to a seemingly random door, albeit slightly assisted by this weird.... Tugging sensation he felt whenever he thought intensely about Ram. It was as if the mere thought of the girl was enough to help guide him to her as he entered through the doorway. Without fail, he found himself back in the Archives with the scene of Ram lying unconscious on the floor and Beatrice sitting in her chair. She attempted to seem uncaring towards the situation, but when Subaru returned her demeanor became different.

"So you've finally returned, I suppose. What did Roswaal have to say to you when you spoke to him, I suppose?" Subaru turned to Ram and walked over to her wordlessly before inquiring "How has Ram been while I've been gone....." Beatrice walked over and placed her hand on Ram's body before standing back up. "Not much of a change, I suppose... Betty did say this would take time and there probably hasn't been enough for her to heal yet, I suppose." Subaru placed a hand to her forehead, not noticing anything other than the feeling of the usually normal Ram beneath his hand. However, in his mind he heard a voice.... It was Ram. Without moving her lips, he still heard her speak. "Subaru... I'm so sorry..... I'm so hungry and tired...". He lifted his hand from her forehead and the voice stopped. Perplexed, he stood up and made a quick statement. "If she wakes up, she'll probably want something to eat.... Beatrice, I'm going to be right back..... I need to eat myself."

Subaru once again wordlessly shut out the world, not hearing Beatrice asking him questions as he walked straight out the Archive front door and made his way over to the kitchen. He did need to eat, and this was a perfect way to blow off some steam in the meantime. He took out his aggression and pent up feelings towards Roswaal on the vegetables he was chopping before taking a deep sigh after preparing all his ingredients. Subaru paused for a moment before working tirelessly to create a large meal for both himself and Ram, should she wake up. He had settled on steamed potatoes and a rich, hardy stew filled with meats, spices and other veggies that would warm himself up. It took some time, but after around two hours including his prep work, everything was finished. He poured a large bowl for both himself and Ram before grabbing tall glasses of milk to go with the food and walked back over to where he felt the pull of magic.

Opening the door, it was a similar scene to what was there the last time he walked in - Beatrice pretending that everything was irritating her when she was concerned, and Ram unconscious on the ground. Subaru brought the tray of food and drinks over to where Ram was laying down, setting it down next to them and eating the meal slowly. He took each bite one at a time, slowly while making little comments trying to wake her up. "Hey Ram.... I've got lunch here for us... it's really good..... Don't you want to wake up and try some of it..... I even made steamed potatoes, your favorite...." and all other manner of enticing phrases, to no avail. He downed the rest of his food, drinking the milk he poured for himself and touching a hand to her forehead once again. "Subaru.... I'm sorry....." was being repeated over and over in his head, while he struggled to find a way to wake her up.

A few minutes of this went by before Subaru decided to do something he never considered before. He laid down next to the poor defenseless girl and wrapped his arms around her before hugging her tightly and speaking into her ear. "I'm the one who's sorry..... I dragged you into this whether you like it or not..... And I never wanted anybody to get involved.... I thought it was okay so long as I was the only one who had to suffer over and over and over.... But now what am I supposed to do...? I'm only one person.... The only thing I have to offer is my ability.... I'm not special in any way.... Please wake up sometime soon.... You do need to eat... and I'll make you whatever you want..."

Ram made no response, but one phrase was filling his conscious mind. "It's okay... you don't have to suffer alone anymore..... I'll be here with you..... For my sister and everything you've done for us that without this gift I'd never know or be able to repay you for....." The thoughts and feeling of intense warmth and joy overtook him, and Subaru began to cry yet again. It was almost a right of passage that he had to bawl his eyes out and make everyone around him think that he was crazy, since nobody would ever be able to understand what he was going through. Nearly an hour of this passed before Subaru felt the girl stir slightly in his arms, turning around in his grasp before speaking. "It's okay, Subaru..... I understand now...." and for the first time since this morning when she passed out, Ram spoke aloud.

Edit/Author's Message: AAaaaaaaaargh, writer's block sucks! Sorry this took so long to write out and continue, I was very unsure how I wanted to continue this story. I hope that the next chapter doesn't take me nearly as long to figure out and put to paper, but I hope that you all enjoy!